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Prevention of armed conflict

Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects

The rule of law at the national and international levels

Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and other organizations

Security Council
Sixty-eighth year

Identical letters dated 7 February 2013 from the Permanent Representative of Slovakia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

On 10 and 11 December 2012, Slovakia, in its capacity as Chair of the Group of Friends of Security Sector Reform, organized a series of events on the United Nations approach to security sector reform. The events were held in cooperation with the Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions (Department of Peacekeeping Operations) and the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (United Nations Development Programme) and with the support of the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces. The series of events comprised: (a) the official launch of the first set of Integrated Technical Guidance Notes on Security Sector Reform developed by the inter-agency Security Sector Reform Task Force; (b) a high-level meeting of the Group of Friends of Security Sector Reform; and (c) an expert-level seminar. Member States showed a high level of interest in the events, which generated several recommendations for the United Nations system that have been included in the summary of the Chair on the series (see annex).

In this regard, I have the honour to submit to you the summary of the Chair as the outcome document of the series, and request your kind assistance in issuing the present letter and its annex as a document of the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly, under items 33, 54, 83 and 121, and as a document of the Security Council, and in distributing it to all Member States.

(*Signed*) František **Ružička**
Ambassador

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Annex to the identical letters dated 7 February 2013 from the Permanent Representative of Slovakia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

The United Nations and security sector reform: high- and expert-level events held in New York on 10 and 11 December 2012, hosted by Slovakia in its capacity as Chair of the Group of Friends of Security Sector Reform

Chair's statement

1. On 10 and 11 December 2012, Slovakia, in its capacity as Chair of the Group of Friends of Security Sector Reform, hosted a series of events: (a) a reception for the launch of the first set of Integrated Technical Guidance Notes on Security Sector Reform developed by the inter-agency Security Sector Reform Task Force; (b) a high-level meeting of the Group of Friends of Security Sector Reform; and (c) an expert-level seminar. The events were supported by the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, the Security Sector Reform Unit of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The overarching objectives of these events were to assess progress in terms of United Nations engagement in supporting security sector reform processes since the first report of the Secretary-General on the topic was issued in January 2008 (A/62/659-S/2008/39) and to provide substantive input for the further development of a comprehensive United Nations approach to security sector reform in the context of the second report of the Secretary-General on the topic, to be issued in 2013.

Launch of the Integrated Technical Guidance Notes on Security Sector Reform

2. The launch of the Integrated Technical Guidance Notes on Security Sector Reform on 10 December brought together approximately 70 representatives of Member States and the United Nations. Hosted by the Permanent Representative of Slovakia to the United Nations, Ambassador František Ružička, at his residence, the event included the delivery of remarks by Deputy Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of Slovakia, Peter Burian and the two co-Chairs of the inter-agency Security Sector Reform Task Force, Assistant Secretary-General for Rule of Law and Security Institutions, Dmitry Titov (Department of Peacekeeping Operations) and Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, Jordan Ryan (UNDP). The speakers presented the first volume of the Guidance Notes, which includes an introduction on the United Nations approach to security sector reform and specific guidance notes on national ownership of security sector reform, gender-responsive security sector reform, peace processes and security sector reform, democratic governance of the security sector and United Nations support to national security policymaking and strategy-making processes. The speakers underlined the value of the Guidance Notes as the embodiment of a common United Nations approach to security sector reform that provides staff in the field and at Headquarters with coherent, system-wide guidance on support to security sector reform processes. It was emphasized that the Guidance Notes represent a crucial element in terms of the implementation of the first report of the Secretary-General on security sector reform. The speakers called for the key

messages of the Guidance Notes to be disseminated widely and used systematically in the field. It was also emphasized that the use of the Guidance Notes in the field, including the development of sound monitoring and evaluation practices, would require enhanced resources and continued support by Member States and partners.

Open high-level meeting of the Group of Friends of Security Sector Reform

3. The open high-level meeting of the Group of Friends of Security Sector Reform, held on the morning of 11 December, was attended by more than 100 representatives of Member States and of the United Nations. The meeting featured keynote addresses by Deputy Minister Burian, Assistant Secretary-General Titov and Assistant Administrator Ryan. These were followed by statements by the Permanent Representatives of Canada, the Netherlands, Nigeria and the Republic of Moldova, and representatives of Argentina, Indonesia, Slovakia, South Africa and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. It provided insights into the United Nations approach to security sector reform to date and Member States' perspectives on priorities for the second report of the Secretary-General on such reform. Particular focus was placed on regional perspectives and partnerships, drawing on the input provided at various regional workshops held in recent years for the Organization's evolving approach to security sector reform. Member States also shared their experiences and lessons identified in supporting the United Nations in security sector reform.

United Nations approach to security sector reform

4. Concerning the evolution of the United Nations approach to security sector reform to date, the Group of Friends recognized that a number of achievements had been made in the areas of field support, normative development and partnerships. In the area of field support, significant progress is visible in the widespread recognition that security sector reform is an essential element of multidimensional peacekeeping operations. This is based on the strengthening of Headquarters and field capacities to deliver coherent support to national and regional security sector reform processes. The inter-agency Security Sector Reform Task Force and the Security Sector Reform Unit of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations have emerged as centres of excellence on such reform. The development of a roster of security sector reform experts, which is managed by the Unit, has increased access to rapidly deployable civilian experts. Extensive outreach and consultations with national, regional and international partners have led to the development of partnerships and to an enhanced understanding of the basic principles and norms that underpin the normative and operational roles of the United Nations with regard to security sector reform. In the area of normative development, the development of the Integrated Technical Guidance Notes on Security Sector Reform was raised as a significant achievement, which represents a contribution to the implementation of a key component of the first report of the Secretary-General. Moreover, it was highlighted that the Guidance Notes represent a body of United Nations experience and, as such, are a reflection of empirically based good practices. The priority is now to operationalize the Notes through coordinated action and enhanced support in the field. Finally, it was recognized that partnerships are essential for ensuring the relevance and sustainability of security sector reform efforts on the ground. Much progress has been made, notably with the African Union through the development of the capacity-building partnership between the African Union Commission and the

Department of Peacekeeping Operations. However, there is still a need to strengthen partnerships with other regional and subregional organizations. This includes the need to engage with organizations such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the East African Community, the Economic Community of West African States and other regional economic communities, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (in the Horn of Africa), the Organization of American States, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Southern African Development Community.

Regional perspectives

5. The important roles that regional organizations play in security sector reform were emphasized in the first report of the Secretary-General. Since then, significant work has been undertaken to learn more about regional perspectives on security sector reform, support their capacity development in this area and lay the ground for long-term partnerships where appropriate. In this regard, Member States reflected on the insights derived from numerous regional workshops that had provided opportunities to discuss approaches and identify regional capacities and good practices. Those discussions had also provided important input for the development of the United Nations approach to security sector reform. Notably, a series of three workshops was co-hosted by Slovakia and a Member State from different regions with the assistance of the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces. The first workshop, on "Enhancing United Nations support for security sector reform in Africa: towards an African perspective", was co-hosted by Slovakia and South Africa and held in Cape Town on 7 and 8 November 2007 (see S/2007/687). This workshop made an important contribution to the first report of the Secretary-General on security sector reform. The second workshop, on "Contributing to the United Nations approach to security sector reform: insights from Latin America and the Caribbean", was co-hosted by Argentina and Slovakia and held in Buenos Aires on 28 and 29 September 2009 (see A/64/530). The third workshop, on "The Role of the United Nations in multidimensional peacekeeping operations and post-conflict peacebuilding: towards an ASEAN perspective", was co-hosted by Indonesia and Slovakia and held in Jakarta on 29 and 30 March 2010 (see A/64/811). In addition, the Government of Canada funded an African regional workshop on security sector reform that was held in March 2009, with support from the Security Sector Reform Unit and in full partnership with the African Union Commission. Since then, numerous other security sector reform-related events with a regional component have been sponsored by Member States. In particular, Nigeria and South Africa, in cooperation with the United Nations, co-hosted two high-level forums and expert seminars on African perspectives on security sector reform, held in 2010 and 2012, respectively. Another high-level event, on "Challenges and opportunities for security sector reform in East Africa", was co-hosted by Slovakia and the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces and held in Nairobi in October 2012. It was recognized that all these events have shaped the way in which the United Nations perceives its role and supports security sector reform in these regions. They have also provided a rich body of regional experiences and lessons for ongoing reflections on the second report of the Secretary-General.

6. It was acknowledged that the United Nations global framework for security sector reform can be meaningful and sustainable only if it is linked to regional

approaches. Each regional building block can provide an important contribution to the larger framework. Against this background, it was recognized that there is also a need to engage with and learn from experiences gained in broad peacebuilding, development and democratization contexts, where security sector reform is equally relevant. If the United Nations is to be effective, it needs to take into account these contexts and the unique challenges and opportunities they present. The United Nations can, for example, draw on the experiences of Latin American and the Caribbean with regard to addressing people-oriented security or of South-East Asia with regard to supporting confidence-building efforts.

7. It was recognized that a number of the principles that had been identified in the first report of the Secretary-General — and that have been emphasized in the various regional workshops — remained of utmost relevance today. These include strengthening accountability and democratic governance in the security sector, promoting national ownership and enhancing coordination among national and international security sector reform stakeholders. It was observed that the challenge lies in how to operationalize these principles. It was also noted, in this respect, that the Integrated Technical Guidance Notes on national ownership and democratic governance ought to help in addressing some of the challenges to implementation. However, greater emphasis is needed on monitoring and evaluating the progress made by the United Nations in support of the implementation of the principles.

Member State perspectives

8. In addition to continued learning from regional experiences, there is a pressing need to reflect on global challenges, opportunities and trends in the area of security sector reform and the implications for United Nations support to such reform. Several Member States shared their views on important issues that need to be addressed. First, it was recognized that the concept of people-oriented security is essential. Security sector reform efforts need to take into account people's experiences in security and justice, in addition to focusing on State institutions. This means looking at local approaches to security sector reform that are based on greater engagement with communities. Second, the implications of recent policy agendas, such as the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States, adopted at the Fourth High-level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, held in Busan, Republic of Korea, in 2011, may be considered. From a security sector reform perspective, this requires supporting country-led and country-owned reforms, as well as reflecting on how to build, not substitute, capacities. Third, the importance of coordination to support security sector reform in a complementary manner must be recognized. In this respect, the development of the Integrated Technical Guidance Notes was raised as a good example of how United Nations inter-agency coordination could lead to tangible outcomes. However, now that the Guidance Notes have been launched, substantial resources need to be dedicated to outreach and training, as well as to monitoring and evaluating their use and, ultimately, their impact in the field. It was underlined that written materials are only as good as the changes reflected in the field.

9. Sustainability and affordability were also identified as key issues. The 2012 public expenditure and needs assessment review of the Liberian security sector, undertaken by the United Nations Mission in Liberia and the World Bank, was cited as an example of an effort to address affordability challenges in the context of transitions. In this respect, it was recognized that long-term funding is essential to ensure financial sustainability and the flexibility required to respond to changes in

complex environments. Long-term funding commitments from both national authorities and their partners need to go beyond quick-win and outcome-oriented approaches to allow for predictability of funding and support national ownership.

10. Finally, participants reiterated the value of the Group of Friends, which brings together Member States with an extremely rich collection of experiences in security sector reform. The organization of meetings of this high-level group was commended for two reasons. First, it enabled Member States to provide input for the second report of the Secretary-General on security sector reform. Second, it marked a revitalization of the Group of Friends as an important platform for dialogue among Member States and a useful interface between Member States and the United Nations system. In this context, South Africa has accepted to become the first rotating co-Chair of the Group of Friends, thus opening the chairmanship up to a Member State from the global South for the first time.

Expert-level seminar on the United Nations and security sector reform

11. The expert-level seminar on "The United Nations and security sector reform" that followed the high-level meeting of the Group of Friends brought together over 50 representatives of Member States and the United Nations and experts. The seminar featured speakers from the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, UNDP and the Peacebuilding Support Office, as well as experts representing regional networks in Africa (the African Security Sector Network) and Asia (the Asia Consultative Group on Security Sector Reform). The seminar provided for substantive discussion on the key themes to be addressed in the development of the second report of the Secretary-General on security sector reform. The first panel assessed critically the achievements made since the adoption of the first report of the Secretary-General, in 2008, and identified the challenges faced in translating its principles and messages into practice. The second panel explored new trends in the area of security sector reform and how the United Nations should position itself to best respond to those trends.

Challenges of implementation

12. It was recognized that the first report of the Secretary-General was a pioneering endeavour and that a number of key achievements have been made in terms of implementation. First, United Nations capacities at Headquarters and in the field have been reinforced to better respond to the growing demand for security sector reform support from national authorities. The number of requests have increased exponentially over the past five years and are becoming increasingly complex as the dynamics of conflict change and as the United Nations adapts its response to fragility and violence. Second, the inter-agency approach to security sector reform has been strengthened through the work of the Security Sector Reform Task Force. Third, the development of the Integrated Technical Guidance Notes represents a significant achievement in terms of implementing a crucial element of the first report. In this respect, it was noted that the significant work of the Task Force should be commended, in particular its role in the development of the Guidance Notes, which built on the individual comparative advantages of the various members of the Task Force.

13. Despite the notable achievements, it was acknowledged that some challenges in implementing the messages contained in the first report remained. First, the

United Nations was under pressure to provide far-reaching support but it was limited in terms of both human and financial resources. The inter-agency Security Sector Reform Task Force, for example, relies on extrabudgetary funding, which means that it is not able to meet its full potential as a system-wide coordination and support mechanism. Its secretariat, the Security Sector Reform Unit, also faces resource constraints that make it challenging to keep up with the soaring demand for assistance. These constraints need to be understood better if the gap between expectations and capability is to be closed. Second, there is a need to complement institutional capacity-development with an enhanced focus on improving service delivery, namely security and public safety, to end-users. This requires supporting people-centred approaches to security sector reform and recognizing that partnerships should be forged not only with regional organizations and Governments but also with civil society organizations and other non-State actors. Partnerships within the United Nations system are also crucial to leverage political capacities on the issue. Doing so means reflecting on how to engage more systematically with the special representatives and deputy-special representatives of the Secretary-General in the field and with the Peacebuilding Commission, among others. Third, efforts should be made to go beyond a focus on security sector components such as police, military, customs, immigration, civil emergency and other related functions. The United Nations and its partners should enhance the assistance they provide at the sector-wide level by, for example, providing support to national security policy and legislative frameworks, national dialogues for a common security vision, democratic and civilian oversight, civil society and other initiatives that define the strategic, security sector budgeting and financial management, governance and oversight framework for reform, and the roles, responsibilities and powers of security institutions. Initiatives at the sector-wide level aim to produce systemic improvements within the security sector by transforming the strategic, architectural and foundational basis common to all security sector components. There is also a need to reflect on how to better promote linkages to other policy areas and initiatives, such as disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, the rule of law, and armed violence and development. Finally, in terms of understanding the value of the United Nations support to security sector reform, there is a need to strongly engage in monitoring and evaluation and, in particular, to reflect on how to meaningfully measure impact.

New trends in security sector reform

14. In the seminar a number of examples of new trends that are relevant for security sector reform and United Nations engagement in this area were identified. These include: the dramatically evolving nature of conflict, which requires new approaches that go beyond purely military or diplomatic approaches; the recognition that violence is one of the biggest obstacles to human development and that addressing violence requires enhanced linkages between security sector reform and development; and the existence of new policy initiatives, such as the international dialogue on peacebuilding and State-building initiative of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, which, among other things, is developing indicators that will support the measurement of progress in important areas of security sector reform.

15. In terms of how the United Nations should position itself to adapt to these trends, numerous approaches were discussed. First, there is a need to recognize and

act on linkages between security sector reform and development, peacebuilding and political transitions. This includes placing security sector reform within a larger strategic framework and supporting national dialogues on such reform. Second, security sector reform should be supported as part of a society-wide rather than a State-centric approach. This presupposes an additional emphasis on local solutions. Third, further support should be provided for South-South cooperation on security sector reform. There needs to be a more direct exchange of experiences among countries that have already undergone reform processes. Such an exchange should include the sharing of both knowledge and technical capacities. Fourth, further emphasis is required on the governance, oversight and management dimensions of security sector reform, with a focus on promoting transparency, responsibility and participation to ensure the effective and accountable delivery of safety and security.

Recommendations

16. The series of events provided a valuable platform for discussing the United Nations approach to security sector reform. The high-level meeting of the Group of Friends of Security Sector Reform and the expert-level seminar resulted in a concrete body of recommendations that were welcomed by United Nations representatives as important contributions for the second report of the Secretary-General on how best to strengthen the comprehensive United Nations approach to security sector reform, which was requested by the Security Council in its presidential statement of 12 October 2011 (S/PRST/2011/19).

Normative level

17. Some of the key recommendations relating to the normative level follow:

(a) There are many contexts other than post-conflict situations where security sector reform is relevant. The United Nations approach to such reform should take into account the need to engage with and learn from experiences gained in broad peacebuilding, development and democratization contexts. The second report of the Secretary-General should take into account these different contexts and assess the support that the United Nations has provided to determine if and how its approach to security sector reform should be adapted to provide effective support in these different contexts;

(b) There is a need to go back to the foundations of security sector reform. A number of security sector reform principles were highlighted in the first report of the Secretary-General and have been emphasized at the various regional workshops that Member States have supported. However, a number of the principles have remained difficult to put into practice. These include, in particular, the principles on national ownership, security sector reform strategies and frameworks, and national and international coordination. In the second report of the Secretary-General, the practicality and validity of the principles contained in the first report should be assessed against the current context. Principles of national ownership, democratic governance of the security sector and national and international coordination should be highlighted as core principles that need to be addressed across the United Nations system. Significant work has been done to incorporate these principles into the Integrated Technical Guidance Notes on Security Sector Reform. Emphasis should be placed on recording and reviewing progress made in the implementation of the Guidance Notes and on compiling best practices;

(c) There is a need to reflect more on a people-centred approach to security sector reform that is based on the improvement of service delivery in the areas of security and public safety to the population. The United Nations should continue to look for ways and means of improving its effectiveness on the ground and assisting Member States in addressing the whole of society.

Operational level

18. Some of the key recommendations relating to the operational level follow:

(a) United Nations support for security sector reform is limited in terms of both human and financial resources. These constraints need to be understood better if the gap between expectations and capability is to be closed. Security sector reform processes require multi-year funding programmes to enhance flexibility in the provision of support as well as long-term planning, which can lead to strengthened sustainability of support. The second report of the Secretary-General should assess how United Nations system-wide human and financial resources in the field and at Headquarters have contributed to the achievement of security sector reform objectives. Based on this assessment and keeping in mind value-for-money principles, consideration should be given in the report to the capacities needed to match support requirements. Such capacities could include enhancing the role and strengthening the inter-agency Security Sector Reform Task Force and its members in terms of their ability to provide backstopping support to the field and to fulfil their system-wide roles;

(b) While the inter-agency Security Sector Reform Task Force has demonstrated the value of its coordination role during the development of the Integrated Technical Guidance Notes, further effort should be made to build on this. This includes the need to reflect on the interoperability of Task Force members. The second report of the Secretary-General should include ways to leverage political capacities and build on existing United Nations strengths and comparative advantages;

(c) Partnerships have been a key element of the United Nations approach to security sector reform, and further attention should be given to enhancing them, especially with Governments and regional and subregional organizations. There is also a need to include national and international non-State actors involved in security sector reform in these interactions, dialogue and frameworks of cooperation. In addition, partnerships should be forged while focusing more on providing support to South-South cooperation;

(d) Greater attention needs to be paid to monitoring and evaluating United Nations support efforts in the area of security sector reform. This is required in order to understand better the impact that the Organization's support has on such reform, with the ultimate objective of further enhancing the support provided.

The way forward

19. During the events, a number of follow-up measures were identified, including:

(a) Submission of the Chair's statement on the events to the Secretary-General, the President of the Security Council and the President of the General Assembly for circulation to Member States and to United Nations agencies and

departments in order to provide fi ther impetus to the continuing dialogue on United Nations support to security sector reform;

(b) Holding of the next meeting of the Group of Friends of Security Sector Reform, at the working level, in the first quarter of 2013, with special emphasis on continuing the important dialogue on the second report of the Secretary-General on security sector reform;

(c) Dissemination of the core messages contained in the Integrated Technical Guidance Notes to a wide audience. Slovakia will examine, with the co-Chairs of the inter-agency Security Sector Reform Task Force and with the support of the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, the possibility of organizing other launch or roll-out events in other regions of the world.